

# DREADED LEOPARD SOCIETY OF SIERRA LEONE BROKEN UP

For Centuries It Practised Murder and Cannibalism on the West Coast of Africa and Was a Source of Terror to White Men and Black

feared his "magic" more than they did his steel bullets.

There is a superstition among the African savages that any man who kills a leopard will be cursed with an evil disease which can only be cured by a ruinously expensive process of three weeks duration under the direction of a leopard society known as the Ukuku. Hence the natives allow leopards—the beasts, I mean—to commit the greatest depredations in and about their towns and they are only aroused to self-defence when a human being becomes the victim of the daring beast. To catch the leopard a small goat is put in a simple trap into which the leopard can enter, but from which it cannot withdraw. He is then despatched with arrows and javelins.

Leopards are the most treacherous animals in all Africa and they are universally feared. When hungry they will advance to the very camp fire, from the side of which they will steal a child

Another native superstition regarding a leopard is the power of a human being to be metamorphosed into one. Such a person is called Uvencwa, and he goes prowling about the homes and camps of his enemies to learn their secrets so that his tribe can effectively attack them and make them prisoners. They are then murdered and offered up as sacrifices and the cannibalistic orgy continues until the cannibals are surfeited with human flesh, the surplus of which is thrown to the vultures.

In some villages when a leopard is killed his body is treated with great

native is a peculiar process. When the hide is stripped from the cat it is thrown in the sun, where it attracts the driver ants. They eat from it every particle of fatty matter. Then the native sleeps on the skin for months until his warm body softens the hide and its curing process is complete.

Several leopard societies for many years held tona dances, at which the medicine men pointed out their enemies and delivered them up for human sacrifices, but the British Government eventually abolished such inhuman practices, even though it had heretofore

about the man's surrender to the woman; in short, everything is possible to the witch doctors, and they are the greatest foe in all Africa to-day to the Christianization and civilization of the savages.

If enlightenment comes to the negroes the sway of the witch doctor is gone, hence he fights with all the evil powers at his command to retain his supremacy. He is an expert with secret poisons and he uses them unsparingly. The voodoo man of the South is the old African witch doctor, for it was from the west coast of Africa that England blackbirds the slaves, who come over here in the early days. A few of those slaves returned to Africa and settled in Liberia and at Freetown in Sierra Leone, but the majority of negroes remained on our shores and their descendants have multiplied greatly. Hence many of the superstitions of our own Southern negroes are but practices brought from savage Africa.

It is recorded that Hannibal, the Carthaginian, was once scared away from a portion of the west African coast by the beating of drums, strange cries and forest fires. Then for centuries the coast disappeared from the horizon of history, only to appear in the fifteenth century when De Clunra, the Portuguese, came for slaves. The roaring of the wind over the mountain caused him to name the place Sierra Leone, which means Lion Mountain.

In 1787 Sierra Leone was ceded to Great Britain by native chiefs, to be used as an asylum for the many destitute negroes then in England, and great numbers of liberated Africans from North America and the West Indies, besides those rescued from slavery on the coast, have from time to time been settled there.

The extreme length of the colony is about 185 miles, with an estimated area of 4,000 square miles and a population of over 80,000. The population is made up of a great variety of tribes, who have been so intermingled that they form almost a distinct race. There are sixty different dialects spoken in the colony, but for general intercourse they have recourse to pidgin English.

The capital of the colony is Freetown and its harbor is the most magnificent on the entire West African coast. A battery of guns protects it and it is a second-class imperial coaling station for ships on the Cape route to India, as well as for West Coast steamers. Freetown is also the gateway of the British possessions on the West Coast and a recruiting station for West Indian regiments. It is the largest city on the entire West Coast, the number of its European inhabitants being greater than that of all the other ports combined. While the climate is very humid and enervating and unfavorable to white men, yet white men are building railways everywhere over which can be hauled the products in which the country is rich. These products are principally rubber, palm oil, palm kernels, ground nuts, gold, ivory and timber.

There are a number of missionary and government schools in the colony, but in the colony's hinterland are the aboriginal tribes, each one speaking its own language, preserving its own customs and living under a more or less well defined feudal system. They are still untutored savages, clothed in lion skins, carrying out their ancestral pursuits of agriculture and war, and it is among these tribes where the dreaded Leopards and other murderous societies thrived and still do thrive.

For the safety of both white and black men let us hope that Sir William Brandford Griffith has at least done away with one of their number: the murderous Leopards.

## "CABARETINO" NEW FORM OF AMUSEMENT.

NEW YORK has found a new form of entertainment, and to the young folks who are compelled to remain in town during the summer months it will no doubt be made welcome. It is called "cabaretino," did you ever do it? No? Well, then, you are out of fashion. In many of the New York restaurants it is no uncommon thing to see groups of young persons, properly chaperoned, sitting at tables sipping refreshments and enjoying the cabaret performances. It is one of the many little-known delights of New York hotel and restaurant life. This high class form of stumping has gained a strong hold, much to the proprietors' delight, upon those New Yorkers who love to sit for a few hours under the glitter of the electric lights.

The many places where turkey trotting is allowed is an added lure for these parties. It is in these places that the visitors when tired of the cabaret show, can turn their attention to the trot and dance to their hearts' delight. Broadway and all its alluring cafes is not the only part of the city where "cabaret parties" visit. Many places in the Bronx and Brooklyn enjoy their patronage.

To the foreigner visiting the city for the first time this newest stumping stunt is one of the many things which cause him to remember New York. To cite an instance of how strongly it impressed an English visitor, a few nights ago he was a guest at a dinner party at the home of a friend on the upper West Side. During the conversation the talk turned to New York restaurants and hotels and how they compared with those on the Continent. The young lady of the family, who recently returned from an extended tour of Europe, told how much more she enjoyed those of New York.

After dinner the party, not wishing to remain at home nor to sit through a performance at one of the theatres, was undecided as to what to do. The young lady thought of the "cabaretino" idea and decided to suggest it as a pleasant way to spend the evening. The start was made at a well known restaurant at Fifty-ninth street, and during the evening the party visited eight restaurants and hotels, all including the Londoner, voted it of the most enjoyable of evenings.

## Does It Hold Water?

A country barber cut a customer's cheek four times while shaving him. "Oh, dear me! How careless!" exclaimed the razor wielder after the infliction of each wound.

When the shave was over the customer took a glass of water, and at every mouthful shook his head from side to side.

"Anything the matter?" the barber asked.

"No," was the reply. "I only wanted to see if my mouth would still hold water without leaking."



"Leopards" Dancing to the Music of the Tom-Tom.

## Powerful Secret Society Dispersed and Forty of Its Members Sentenced to Be Hanged

WHEN Sir William Brandford Griffith, Chief Justice of the Gold Coast, arrived in London the other day he brought his Government the best news it has had from the colony in many a year. That news was the breaking up and dispersion of the Leopard Society, a secret murder organization which for centuries has terrorized Sierra Leone, Great Britain's largest and richest possession on the west coast of Africa.

After years of patient secret service work 100 members of the dread society were brought to trial and Chief Justice Griffith sentenced forty of them to be hanged, while the remainder were deported.

Courageous indeed is Sir William to take such drastic measures against such a powerful secret society, and unless he has succeeded in forever breaking its backbone his life will not be worth a tuppence should he again return to West Africa. For from the latter half of the fourteenth century until the present day every white man who has set foot on the hostile shores of West Africa has lived in hourly fear of one or more of its infamous secret societies, whose practices include cannibalism and human sacrifices. The natives too fear these societies, and how Sir William was able to secure the information which led to the founding up of the Leopards would make thrilling and interesting reading if he cared to narrate it.

The Leopards got their name from the fact that when they seized their victims for sacrifice they covered themselves with leopard skins. Initiating the roar of a leopard, they would spring upon their victim and plunge into each side of his throat a three-pronged fork. Then certain parts of his body, such as a leg, a hand and the heart, were taken for "ju-ju" or fetish purposes, and the rest of his body was eaten.

Sometimes, instead of the three-pronged fork, there were fixed in the paws of the leopard skins sharp pointed knives, the skin being made into a sort of glove into which the head of the human leopard fitted. The knives are shaped like a leopard's claw, curved, sharp pointed and with cutting edges underneath. The mutilated victim looks as though he had really been clawed to death by a leopard, and more than one murder committed by a human leopard has been credited to the beast leopard.

While most of the victims were killed to provide human flesh for the secret rites of the society, any member of the society who wished to rid himself of an enemy lay in ambush for him, and rushing upon him, clawed him to death and then retired to the bush, where he feasted upon the dead body. Then he would go to the dead man's town and walk off with his women and children and other possessions, and no one would dare molest him for fear of being likewise clawed to death and eaten.

One of the many peculiar customs of the Leopards was that the latest member must provide the body of a relative for the entertainment of the other members. A member of one of these societies thinks nothing of sacrificing a son or a daughter, hence sacrificial cannibalism is always breaking out, and the European Governments have not yet succeeded in stamping out all of these human murder societies. In the neighborhood of some of the big coast towns they are being forced further into the interior. With the doing away of the Leopards Sierra Leone for the first time in hundreds of years is free from the terror which has haunted it.

When I was returning from the West African jungles there came aboard the steamer a white missionary woman, who had in charge three dainty little savage girls who had been rescued just in time from a hut where they awaited a certain day when the moon would be full and when they would be marked with white pigments and offered as sacrifices at one of the feasts of the Leopards.

Another time I was at a mission when a native crawled to the station for medical treatment. He was in a dreadful state. He had wounds all over his body, which were supposed to have been inflicted by the claws of a leopard, but in reality he was a victim of human leopards. He said that he was making plantation and while bending over cutting the trunk undergrowth away he was suddenly pounced upon from behind and a number of sharp instruments were driven into the back of his neck. Although the wounds were deep and he lost much blood, he managed to crawl through the bush five miles to the mission station; but treatment did him no good, for he died one hour after his arrival at the mission.

He arrived at his home town the little girls were started by their mother asking where their little brother was. The little girls couldn't tell where he had disappeared and after a search of some days the little boy's body was found stretched out on the beach. It was slit all over longitudinally with long cuts on the face, head, legs and arms. The murder had to go unavenged because of the universal dread in which the Leopards are held.

A white trader also told me how he narrowly escaped being murdered and eaten.

For some reason or other, the natives had a grudge against him and no one came to buy or sell at his store; he couldn't even get food and he was in danger of starving.

He was smoking on his veranda one night wondering how he was going to get out of the palaver which he knew threatened him with death, when on the night's still air there was borne to his ears a native chant which was peculiar in that it was of few words which were repeated over and over again. The chant finally got on his nerves and he was in the act of sending a servant to drive away the singer, who was invisible in the surrounding bush, when suddenly he caught the name the natives had given him mingled with other words. Listening breathlessly he laboriously followed the chant and this is what he heard:

"They are going to attack your factory at sundown to-morrow; they are going to attack your factory at sundown to-morrow."

It was a friend, a native, warning him out of the darkness, and to let him friend know he had heard he struck a match and on the night's breeze he also sent forth a chant, but it was simple and of one word and that word was:

"Awaka, awaka, awaka" (thank you, thank you, thank you).

There was a rustling in the nearby bush, then silence.

The white man heeded the warning and when the Leopards came to his factory at sundown the next night he was sitting on his counter, a loaded Mauser carelessly laid across his left arm, while his right hand toyed with the trigger of a .44 calibre Colt.

He courageously demanded why the Leopards wished to murder him, and the Leopards, dumfounded at his knowledge of their plans, demanded if the white man's "magic" had enabled him to read the hearts of the black men. The trader immediately caught the idea that his safety lay in his affecting knowledge of the thoughts and actions of the savages, so he unhesitatingly and unblushingly declared in the picturesque English of the coast:

"Ju-ju, for white man make him see all things what live for heart and head of black man, and ju-ju for white man never allow him to become chop for black man's mouth."

And the white man dwelt there in safety ever afterward, for the savages

made off with it to the bush. Other wild animals can be kept away by fire, but not so the leopard. Hence the great fear in which he is held, and hence the taking of his name by the Leopards, whose annihilation has just been accomplished.

PLAN RAIL AND STEAMSHIP ROUTE BETWEEN LONDON AND SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA



FROM London to Winnipeg, a distance of more than 2,400 miles, in five days is the object of a fast crown subsidized rail and steamship system which is planned to operate between the British capital and Sydney, Australia, reducing the running time between those centres to twenty-one days. Twenty-six knot steamships of the Knapp type, having finer lines and smaller displacement

than the Mauretania, will run from Blackhead, a new harbor on the north-west coast of Ireland, to Cape St. Charles, Labrador, in three days. Thence to Winnipeg mails and passengers will be raced over an air line railway in another thirty-six hours. From the Manitoba metropolis to the Pacific Coast one of three routes is to be determined upon by the promoters of the "Imperial All Red Route," as the latest highway to the Antipodes is known.

The lowering of the time of passage between London and New York, as well as Toronto, Pittsburgh, Detroit, Chicago and other American and Canadian cities, is an important consideration in the working out of the new project, according to Harry Chapin Plummer, who, in an article in the June issue of the National Waterways Magazine, published in this city by the National Rivers and Harbors Congress, states that by the Blackhead-Cape St. Charles route and Quebec one day may be gained over the existing schedule maintained by the Mauretania and Lusitania between Liverpool and New York. He observes:

"Although conceived as a new medium of transportation between the capital of Britain and far away New Zealand and Australia, the 'All Red

Route' enters actively into consideration as a highway for distances that, while representing but a fraction of the grand total of mileage is in itself of great extent. From London to Winnipeg in five days is as important an object relatively as the accomplishment of a twenty-one day schedule between London and Sydney."

"This great highway through England, Scotland and Ireland across the Atlantic to Labrador, across British North America, over the most northerly parallels of latitude yet followed by trunk line railways, and diversely across the Pacific to distant Yokohama, Hong Kong and Shanghai and to yet more distant Auckland and Sydney, is planned to serve the purposes of war as well as the pursuits of peace. It will be backed by the might and the combined resources of the United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand and Australia."

Sir Thomas H. C. Troubridge of London and a syndicate of leading financiers of England have let contracts for the commencement of construction work upon the line of railway which is to connect Blackhead with the northern cross-country routes of the Irish Railway system terminating at Larne, on the North Channel, near Belfast, where a car ferry connection will be effected with

respect and brought into the killer's village. Messages are then sent to neighboring villages and when everybody is assembled in the killer's village the gall bladder is carefully removed from the leopard and burned in a great fire and every savage present vigorously rubs his hands up and down his arms to disavow any guilt in the affair.

The gall is burned because it is believed to be deadly poison and if it is found in any man's possession—unless he is a great chief—the punishment is quick death. If a great chief commits a crime which merits death it is not considered right that he should die in a common way, but he is given a leopard's gall.

The "ju-ju" parts of the leopard are the whiskers, and it is impossible to get a leopard's skin from the native with them on. Gay reckless young hunters wear the whiskers stuck in their hair and swagger about creating a tremendous impression on their dusky sweethearts, while the elders shake their heads and keep a keen eye on the subsequent conduct of the young bucks.

The skin of an African leopard is the most beautiful of all leopard skins. The coloring is rich and distinct and clear. The tanning of leopard skins by the

been unable to disband the societies themselves. Ju-ju, or Fetish, is the name given to the religion of the natives of the west coast of Africa, where they have not been influenced by either Christianity or Mohammedanism. The savages firmly believe that neither sickness nor death is natural, but that each is the result of some evil, hence to guard against evil of all sorts charms are worn and venerated and great faith is placed in their power to protect and guard. The charms are made by witch doctors or sorcerers and are sold to the natives in exchange for rubber, ivory, palm kernels or other native products.

So powerful are the witch doctors that people live in abject fear of them, and their hold over the savages is almost beyond belief. They are said to be able to bring down rain or create a drought, to give plenty of crops or to create a famine. If a woman desires a male or a female child they can bring about the birth of the sex desired; if a man dies the witch doctors can seek out and deliver up the murderer to the family of the murdered one. If a woman wishes a man to look tenderly upon her witch doctors have a charm to bring

sudden diversion thither of a traffic universal in its scope and gigantic in volume. Grain elevators, coal and oil storage, warehouses and all the equipment of a great harbor terminals, where to a vigorous and spreading population is sure to be attracted, will place Blackhead well in the race for maritime supremacy among the port cities of the British Isles. The consequent effect upon the industrial position of the north Irish country, of which Blackhead will be the logical gateway, is obvious.

The establishment of a first class seaport so far north on the Atlantic coast of Ireland as Blackhead would not only afford greater security to the United Kingdom as a nation, but would better insure the entry into the country under stress of war of provisions, for which the British Isles are quite dependent upon the outside world. In this respect Vice-Admiral Campbell is quoted as follows:

"In the undesirable but not impossible event of war between Great Britain and two or more European Powers the position of Blackhead Bay would force enemy's cruisers, should they attempt to prey upon the vessels using it, to run the gantlet of the English Channel and near Atlantic and operate on a prohibitive and almost impossible radius, with absolutely no recuperative base."

"Any national expenditure necessary to insure the success of the 'Imperial All Red Route' would be repaid a hundredfold by the vast saving effected in cruiser protection and the feeling of security which would result from the certainty of the continuation of the Canadian wheat supply by the shortest possible route, even in the most serious condition of a two Power war."

"Although a well known fact it has never been brought home to the inhabitants of our islands how absolutely dependent we are on importation for our food supply, and it is hardly realized that, situated as we are, with a decreasingly proportionate command of the sea, a week with supplies cut off would badly pinch even the wealthy portion of the community and a month would certainly bring about starvation, followed by anarchy!"



Wooden Mask Worn by 'Leopard' on Murder Expedition

Market Day in Sierra Leone, Looks A Great Deal Like One of Our Own Southern Towns.

